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Mrs Emma Moakes
Waterside Primary School
Ashford Crescent
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Hampshire
SO45 6ET

Dear Mrs Moakes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Waterside Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 July 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- develop skills of middle leaders, so they can all support your drive for rapid improvement
- improve the teaching and learning of writing skills across the school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and the interim deputy headteacher, a group of governors and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions

taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and reviewed other documentation to support the school's journey of improvement, such as monitoring of teaching and minutes of governors' meetings. With you, I visited classes and evaluated work in pupils' books. I met with middle leaders, teachers and pupils. I also checked documents related to safeguarding.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, the previous headteacher retired in July 2017 and you took on the role of acting headteacher, until your permanent appointment in January 2018. The interim deputy headteacher has been at the school since September 2017 and is expected to continue for a further academic year.

Main findings

You and the interim deputy headteacher have acted with determination and rigour to successfully tackle the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Your absolute focus on improving teaching and learning has led to much-improved outcomes in a very short space of time.

Your positive and collegiate approach, combined with effective communication and consistent processes, has ensured that staff support your drive for improvement, and recognise that the changes are necessary and positive. Consequently, although the school has been through a challenging time, the staff team has remained stable and all are working well with you to take the school to good.

As a result of improved self-evaluation systems, you now know where the school's strengths and weaknesses are. You use this information well to identify appropriate and timely training for leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. Across the school, staff are better able to meet pupils' learning needs. Your work to develop leaders is bringing results. However, some leaders who have taken on responsibilities more recently are not clear enough about what they need to do to improve teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

Governors have successfully reviewed their structure, organisation and effectiveness. They now have the necessary skills, and are developing their knowledge, to challenge leaders more effectively. They are clear-thinking about what the school needs in terms of senior leadership. For example, they recognise the current senior leadership arrangements are bringing rapid improvement, so they have organised for this to continue for another year.

Leaders are rightly determined that all pupils make up ground lost from previously weak teaching. They have implemented effective systems and processes to check pupils' progress and attainment in year, and over time. Leaders and teachers review the progress of pupils in each class, identifying those that are not working at the standard typical for their age, and provide useful support to enable them to catch

up. As a result, many pupils are making rapid progress and end-of-year outcomes are better than last year. This is particularly the case for Year 6 pupils, where attainment improved greatly.

Teachers are becoming more effective. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and why. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons much more than they used to as they are more interesting than before. Teachers now encourage pupils to be independent and develop their own learning. Consequently, pupils use their skills and knowledge to improve their work before seeking feedback and next steps from teachers.

Teaching of mathematics and reading is improving well across the school. There is a systematic approach, which all teachers follow, and leaders in these subjects check that pupils' books show good progress. However, leaders' analysis of results and pupils' work in books has identified that the teaching of writing is not as strong as other subjects.

Teaching of groups has improved in some classes but teaching of the most able continues to be an area for further development. Although a few teachers plan activities which challenge the most able pupils to think more deeply, this is not consistently the case across the school. Teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is better than it was, but a more systematic approach to target-setting and reviewing progress would enable teachers to be clearer about how they can challenge and support these pupils.

Leaders and teachers are working together to improve the curriculum. In each class, teachers plan how they will develop skills and knowledge across the curriculum, linking art, history, writing and geography. The planned whole-school subject-specific days and weeks provide an opportunity for pupils to explore subjects in greater depth. Pupils learn about British values and citizenship, working as members of a community. They know about justice, democracy and tolerance and can explain how these are seen in school. Pupils are cooperative, respectful and supportive of one another. Leaders and teachers rightly acknowledge there is more to do to develop and embed improvements in the curriculum.

Processes to record and check attendance are much more rigorous. Pupils now know that attendance is important and parents understand that absence will be followed up. However, although leaders' actions are sensible, they have not resulted in resolving issues with attendance. Leaders have not reviewed and amended their actions and governors have not challenged this sufficiently robustly.

The school improvement plan identifies the planned actions to improve the school. Leaders and governors check whether actions are completed and have been effective in driving improvements. However, there are a few examples where sufficient improvements are not being made and leaders do not swiftly amend their planned actions. This is evident in leaders' work to improve attendance.

External support

You have made good use of the effective support provided by the local authority. Advisers for subject development, coaching for the development of teaching and leadership, alongside support for you and governors, have all contributed to the rapid journey of improvement the school is making.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams
Ofsted Inspector